

bed. The nest locality was *c.* 11 km north of Zigida (Lofa County) at 540 m in the Lofa Mountains of northern Liberia.

The nest burrow was in a gently sloping portion of a sandy bank *c.* 45 cm above a small pool of water. It was *c.* 40 cm deep with a 45 mm opening. A bird flew from the burrow and perched in the lower limbs of an understory tree allowing close observation and positive identification. The two eggs were subspherical, cream-white (speckled brown from earth), and both measured 22.5 × 18.0 mm; they were unincubated. They have been deposited in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Details accord closely with nests and eggs of the nominate race, but the Liberian nest was in a gently sloping (not steep) bank, and its burrow was shallower. Nests of most bee-eater species vary in burrow depth and site characteristics (Fry *et al.* 1992).

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Monotypy of *Francolinus griseostriatus*

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The Grey-striped Francolin *Francolinus griseostriatus* is one of a suite of species endemic to the escarpment zone of western Angola, where it occurs in two apparently disjunct populations, a northern one extending from Cuanza Norte and Malanje to Cuanza Sul, and a southern one confined (after a boundary extension that embraced northern Huila) to the province of Benguela (Hall 1961, 1963, Pinto 1983, Urban *et al.* 1986).

Pinto (1983) treated these two populations as racially distinct, based on eight specimens from Benguela (in the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, Luanda) having generally darker underparts, with more cinnamon than buff ("fulvo-esbranquiçado") shading to the feather edges and broader, deeper brown feather centres, and with undertail coverts marked with darker spots and bars. He also detected a very slight increase in size in these birds, albeit with much overlap. However, he felt unable to give them a name for want of immediate comparative material.

Ironically, outside Angola it is the want of southern birds in collections that has delayed progress in this matter, but one was located in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CM), Pittsburgh, and another proves to exist in the series of six held by the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), New York. In May 1997 the Carnegie bird, CM 108689, a female from Chingoroi, Benguela, 13°37'S 14°01'E, taken at 670 m in October 1930 by R. and L. Boulton, was sent to New York for examination alongside the five adult AMNH specimens (541414, female, Canhoca, 9°15'S 14°41'E, December 1903, by W. J. Ansorge; 348799, male, Ndala Tando, 9°18'S 14°54'E, undated, no collector; 541410, female, and 541411, male, Ndala Tando, September 1908, by W. J. Ansorge; 541413, male, Bongo River, Benguela, 13°25'S 14°40'E, August 1904, by W. J. Ansorge). All coordinates are from Traylor (1963).

From above, no differences in these six birds are apparent that would not be attributable to minor individual variation. From below, the two most distinct are AMNH 541414 and 348799, which have the tawny markings on the breast, flanks and belly reduced to fairly narrow streaking. By contrast, 541410 and 541411 possess substantially broader, blotch-like markings on the breast. However, the last three are from the same locality, and the first is from a site not far distant, suggesting that either individual or age-related factors are in play.

More significantly, 541410 and 541411 are little if at all different from 541413 and CM 108689. It is true that the tawny markings on the undersides of the CM bird appear very slightly broader and more extensive than on the other specimens, most notably 541410; but the differences between 541413 and 541411 are entirely negligible and militate heavily against any racial separation of the two populations they represent. Nothing in the shading of the markings on the underparts or on the undertail coverts on any of the specimens indicated any consistent differences between the representatives of the two populations. No measurements were taken, although wing-lengths were qualitatively compared and found to be very similar.

If heavier marking on the undersides is a sign of greater age, then the only way in which Pinto's view might yet prevail is if AMNH 541410 and 541411 are old birds showing the broadest feather blotching that representatives of the northern population ever achieve, while 541413 and CM 108689 are young birds yet to acquire the distinctiveness that Pinto recognised in the Luanda series. This seems rather improbable,